

Better Dental Care Vital to Pet Health

Awareness is Key to Prevent Oral Disease in Patients

As we celebrate National Dental Health Month, it is a great time to reinforce the importance of dental healthcare for dogs and cats. The American Veterinary Dental Society (AVDS) reports that 80% of dogs and 70% of cats show signs of oral disease by age 3, making it one of the most frequently diagnosed health problems for pets. Unfortunately, Periodontal Disease does not produce obvious clinical signs until the disease is in advanced stages. Because of this, it is often left untreated which increases the likelihood of the infection moving to other parts of the body and causing serious health problems such as heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, and bone loss. Preventative care and awareness is vital in combating this serious disease.

Promoting National Dental Health Month

Ideally, every client that visits a clinic would leave not only with the knowledge of the seriousness of Periodontal Disease, but would also leave equipped to prevent the disease from developing in their pet. National Dental Health Month is an opportunity for veterinarians to educate pet owners of the importance of dental care. The AVDS has recommendations to pet owners to help reduce the risk of oral health disease. The following steps are based on those recommendations and are easy to implement and essential in promoting oral healthcare for your clients:

Awareness Tips

1 Encourage dental check-ups with your existing and potential clients

- Display posters
- Newsletter articles
- Phone greetings
- Send email alerts
- Website updates
- Offer promotions for dental visits

2 Establish a solid home maintenance program

Vétoquinol supplies the products that are critical in a home maintenance program (outlined below).

3 Schedule follow-up visits

Implement a routine dental visit schedule for each client and schedule their next appointment before they leave the office.

Home Maintenance Program

To ensure clients are well-educated on oral care of their pets, dental experts recommend that veterinarians should implement education and pet owner-compliant supplies at an early age. It is important that the products supplied to pet owners are easy to administer and that they are highly palatable to the pet. Human toothpaste is not recommended because it has been known to cause gastric upset in pets. Encourage yearly check-ups and dental exams as needed. It was reported in the 2009-2010 American Pet Products Association (APPA) National Pet Owners Survey that 31% of dog owners have purchased some type of dental product for their pet in the past 12 months, with the most common being a toothbrush (17%) and toothpaste (15%). Only 1 in 10 owners bought tartar control products for their dog in the past 12 months.¹ This is an opportunity to not only educate clients, but to provide solutions that will aid in effective homecare practices that compliment regular veterinary exams. Vétoquinol, a global leader in animal healthcare, has a complete line of dental hygiene products for veterinarians to address this ongoing problem.

The dental care products by Vétoquinol have been designed with the pet and pet owner in mind. Each component is designed to be palatable for the pet, making it easier on the owner to administer and ultimately giving the owner the confidence to repeat use.

Enzadent® Product Group

The Enzadent products contain enzymes naturally found in saliva that generate a flow of OSCN ions (hypothiocyanite) to help safely regulate the microbiological oral ecosystem of pets. The Salivary Peroxidase System technology is used in the manufacturing of these products, with decades of research to support its effectiveness.

The Enzadent Dual-Ended Toothbrush

is specifically designed to adapt to small and large tooth surfaces with soft bristles for gentle application. The *Enzadent Fingerbrush* is also available for clients who prefer to use that particular method of brushing. *Enzadent Enzymatic Toothpaste (Malt or Poultry Flavor)* does not need to be rinsed and is safe to swallow. Enzadent toothpaste increases owner compliance and pet acceptance because of its high palatability.

Another preventative solution is the

Enzadent Oral Care Chews. The chews provide a natural abrading action to help remove plaque and food debris and are enzymatically treated to help boost the pets' own natural defenses found in saliva. Pet owners should select a chew based on the size of their pet. Four different sizes are offered for large, medium, small and petite breeds. Additionally, Enzadent offers oral care chews for cats that are enzymatically treated, freeze-dried fish that have the same abrading action for plaque and food removal while chewing.

Dentahex™ Chlorhexidine Oral Care Products

The Dentahex products contain Chlorhexidine which inhibits plaque accumulation on tooth surfaces, decreases the quantity of bacteria in saliva, alters the composition of microbial flora, binds to oral mucosal surfaces and is released slowly over time.

Dentahex Chews are made with American beefhide and are available in sizes for large, medium, small and petite breeds. It is important to note that Dentahex Chews have Chlorhexidine incorporated throughout the chew. Other products have their chews coated with Chlorhexidine in the final step of the manufacturing process. When applied in this manner, the Chlorhexidine loses its long-lasting effect and can leave blue residue on carpeted surfaces.

The *Dentahex Oral Rinse* is important to use as a final step in dental exams or surgical procedures. The rinse may also be used when owners are unable to brush their pets' teeth. The unique formulation is a palatable and highly effective antimicrobial, anti-plaque and anti-calculus rinse that aids in the prevention of tooth and gum disease. When applied along the gum line, the rinse disperses rapidly and covers the entire oral cavity, killing any remaining bacteria and helping retard new bacterial growth.

The Vétoquinol products above provide clients the much needed resources to supplement the routine clinical visits and effectively care for their pets' dental needs at home. Find out more about Vétoquinol and download literature on these products at www.vetoquinolusa.com.

The Salivary Peroxidase System

In the normal mammalian mouth bacteria builds up. A by-product of bacteria is hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂). At any given time, dogs and cats have some level of hydrogen peroxide in the mouth. When the level of H₂O₂ reaches a certain point, the salivary peroxidase defense system is triggered. Lactoperoxidase and thiocyanate are released. Lactoperoxidase is a binding enzyme that will grab the H₂O₂ molecule and attach it to the thiocyanate molecule forming hypothiocyanite (OSCN). This new molecule is available, thus reducing bacterial levels in the mouth. After reducing the bacteria levels, the OSCN molecule goes into an inactive mode and waits for bacteria to build up again, thus triggering the salivary peroxidase defense system again.

¹American Pet Products Association (APPA), 2009-2010 National Pet Owners Survey. Greenwich, CT.